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DEPT FOR SCA.FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A,
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE,
NSC FOR JWOOD
OSD FOR KIMMETT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: NEW GHAZNI GOVERNOR AND AMBASSADOR DISCUSS TALIBAN

REF: KABUL 3182

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: During a meeting October 16, recently appointed Ghazni governor Lawang Faizan appeared to seek the Ambassador's endorsement for his plans to reach out to Taliban fighters in Ghazni. The Ambassador welcomed Faizan's efforts in principle, but cautioned that reconciles must not have any connection to Al Qaeda, must submit to the laws of Afghanistan, and must cooperate with government investigations of insurgent activity. Faizan lamented that innocent civilians are sometimes arrested or killed in coalition operations, and urged ISAF's cooperation with his administration. The Ambassador regretted civilian casualties or mistaken detentions, but noted that public cooperation is critical to precise military operations. He urged Faizan to lead Ghazni's population to defy Taliban intimidation, and report on insurgent activities. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) During an unscheduled meeting at the Embassy October 16, the recently appointed governor of Ghazni, Lawang Faizan, appeared to seek the Ambassador's endorsement for his ambitious plans to reach out to Taliban fighters in the province to encourage their reconciliation with the government. Faizan took credit for the reported recent surrender of a 50-man Taliban unit (septel) in Ghazni. He said the unit had originally joined the Taliban out of financial desperation and frustration over IROA unresponsiveness to their economic plight. He claimed its successful re-integration into society would prompt further Taliban reconciliations in neighboring Paktika and Paktya provinces.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador welcomed in principle the reintegration of surrendering Taliban, but marked red lines: prospective reconciles cannot have had any affiliation with Al Qaeda; must submit to the laws of Afghanistan; and must cooperate with government investigations into insurgent organizations and activities. He warned of a harsh Coalition reaction against Taliban who attempt to deceive the IROA with false surrenders.

¶4. (C) Lamenting that innocents are sometimes arrested or killed inadvertently by Coalition forces, Faizan urged ISAF's

coordination with his provincial administration when conducting military operations in Ghazni. He said the province's population had grown weary of the Taliban and promised to transform this weariness into outright popular opposition to the insurgency through his own advocacy and by delivering good governance.

¶15. (C) The Ambassador expressed regret for any civilian casualties or mistaken detentions. He highlighted the role the civilian population can play in identifying Taliban to ensure precise military targeting. He asked Faizan to encourage Ghazni's Pashtun population to defy Taliban intimidation and provide information about insurgent operatives and their plans to Coalition forces. Timely tips from observant citizens would enable Coalition military forces to focus on eliminating Taliban efficiently with minimal disruption to the lives of the province's civilian population.

¶16. (C) Comment: President Karzai appointed Faizan governor in September because of his reportedly excellent contacts among some Ghazni insurgent groups (reftel). Though Faizan claims early success in using those contacts to induce an insurgent unit's surrender, it is not yet clear if the 50 reconcilees are actual Taliban or opportunists angling for the assistance intended to facilitate former insurgents, reintegration into civilian life.

WOOD